4/29/20

Dear Grace Church Family,

I hope you are all faring well and staying healthy as we journey through the challenges associated with the Covid 19 pandemic. Grace is an amazing family of faith. I have heard from many of you about how your faith is growing despite the sheltering and other issues related to the virus. My prayer for you is that God will continue to watch over and bless you all and safely bring us together again soon as a family of faith.

At this point, we are awaiting the governor’s blessing on our state’s going back to work and our beginning to gather socially also. Churches are to be included in that early on, and for that gift, we give many thanks. For Grace, and all the churches of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida, we will continue to worship through our recorded services until Bishop Brewer gives his blessing on reopening and on holding worship services in our sanctuaries. I will get the word out as soon as he gives his blessing to us.

As we prepare to gather once again, we are going to offer our church family a drive thru communion opportunity this Sunday, May 3 between 10:00 and 11:00 am. This will be done by entering and driving through our parking lot from Monroe St. (the street that runs behind the parish hall), then stopping to receive the bread and wine before exiting onto Ridgewood Ave. For everyone’s safety, I will be wearing a mask and gloves while distributing communion. Please note that we will remain in our cars the entire time.

I feel it is important to keep you informed about our finances during this difficult time. First, I want to thank you for continuing to send in your pledges while we are sheltering apart from one another. I cannot emphasize enough how important this is for us. For example, during the month of March, we fell behind about $5,000.00. This was primarily due to a loss of income from cancelled events and the absence of Sunday plate income, not from a shortage of tithe and pledge income.

We do not have our April figures finalized yet, but it looks like it is going to be another month with income that is significantly below expenses. We do not have many options for reducing our overhead, so we are facing some profoundly painful cuts in our efforts to balance our budget. More than ever, your prayers and generosity are crucial for our survival. For so many churches everywhere, this is a serious problem, so please keep us all in your daily prayers.

We have applied for Payroll Protection Program monies and are awaiting SBA approval of our application. Please pray that we receive these funds soon. With them we will be able to offset many payroll expenses and have a better ability to balance our budget going forward. Hopefully, we will know if we are approved within a few days.

I am optimistic that we will survive this storm as we have survived so many in the past 130 years. God didn’t bring Grace this far just to abandon us now. He loves this church and all the good we do in Jesus name. I am certain that He has many more blessings for us in the future, so let’s prayerfully do our part to keep moving forward as the church of open arms.

Blessings, Fr. Rick